

and New Guinea. In April this year Dr. I. H. Steward collected one in the estuary of the King Edward River (north Kimberley). The snake was captured at high tide on a moonless night, several hundred yards from the mangrove-lined shore.

Denisonia mastersi (Krefft) of south-eastern Australia was first collected in this State in January 1963, when Mr. A. M. Douglas found one under rubbish near the long-abandoned telegraph station at Euela. It has since been found near Coeklebidy, 160 miles further west.

—G. M. STORR, W.A. Museum.

An Early Occurrence of the Kelp Gull in South-Western Australia.—While working through the bird collection at the Western Australian Museum, I was momentarily puzzled with the identity of a juvenile-plumaged gull (No. A2701) collected at Claremont on August 22, 1924, labelled *Gabianus* (= *Larus*) *pacificus*, but which had a bill too small for this species. That it was in fact a Kelp or Dominican Gull, *L. dominicanus*, soon became obvious. The specimen was later forwarded to Mr. F. C. Kinsky of the Dominion Museum, Wellington, New Zealand, who substantiated the identification and remarked (*in litt.*) that the specimen is a first-year bird which was collected only about six months after reaching the flying stage.

The particulars of the specimen are: female; exposed culmen length, 45 mm.; culmen depth at base, 18.5; culmen depth at angle of gonys, 19; tarsus, 66; right wing, 411; left wing, 416; tail, 165. Predominate'y brown mottled plumage with no conspicuous diagnostic markings on wings and tail. No primaries nor rectrices missing.

Kinsky (*Rec. Dominion Mus.*, 4 (14), 1963: 161) has shown that although the dimensions of New Zealand and sub-antarctic birds overlap, the latter tend to be smaller than those from the more temperate regions, the differences being particularly evident in the bill and wing. The measurements of the specimen coincide with the upper limit measurements of first year females of the New Zealand population as given by Kinsky, and do not lie within the range of those of the sub-antarctic islands to the south-west of the State. Apparently, therefore, the individual originated from New Zealand rather than from the South Indian Ocean region which was first suspected on the basis of the bird having been collected near Perth.

The Kelp Gull was recently observed at Albany, and at Boulanger Island, Jurien Bay (*J. Ford, W. Aust. Nat.*, 9, 1964: 86).

—JULIAN FORD, Perth.

The Black-throated Whiplbird near Gnowangerup.—A few miles east of Gnowangerup an unsealed road leaves the main Gnowangerup-Ongerup highway and runs practically due east. Where it reaches the summit of a slight rise in typical sandplain country Dean Fisher, Fred Johnston and myself, while on our way to the Albany Field-Outing of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union on October 26,

1963, spent a profitable few early-morning hours bird observing. In an area of thick vegetation, about half-a-mile long and a few hundred yards wide, consisting of various low shrubs, in which species of *Dihymnia* and *Verticordia* could be detected, but dominated by a rather extensive patch of *Banksia* sp., we recorded apparently three pairs of Black-throated Whipbirds (*Psophodes nigrogularis*). Not far from the road one of us (Johnston) heard persistent eall-notes, which intrigued him greatly, but he did not penetrate far into the thick vegetation.

Adjacent to this area was an inviting patch of mallee and we left the car here and took a circuitous route of a mile or more through the mallee, over the sandplain and returned through the rear of the *Banksia* scrub back to the road. In the mallee the Southern Scrub-Robin (*Drymodes brunncopygia*) and Shy Heath-Wren (*Hylacola cauta*) were seen and the Purple-gaped Honey-eater (*Meliphaga cratitia*) was fairly common and one bird located adding lining to a near-completed nest. On the sandplain a few Emu-Wrens (*Stipiturus malachurus*) were noted and a fine pair of Blue-breasted Wrens (*Malurus pulcherrimus*) were persistent to one spot and a search located a completed nest ready for eggs. A Square-tailed Kite (*Lophoictinia isura*) flew low in harrier-fashion back and forth and offered us splendid views of this rare and interesting species.

Almost as soon as we reached the dense *Banksia* area we flushed two birds and each of us for the next ten minutes obtained quite good views, despite the secretive movements of the birds. We were all certain of their being Black-throated Whipbirds. In their movements when flushed by us they usually perched for a few moments on the lower branches of the banksias, which were thickly limbed right to the ground, but usually glimpses were obtained as they passed between us through the undergrowth. Their usual note uttered at this time was more of a scolding eall, but after they settled down the persistent'y-repeated metallic, musical notes, heard earlier by Johnston, were given. As we moved slowly through this area back to the road this call was heard clearly from two other places but ceased before we could locate any more birds.

It is difficult to find any sign of similarity with the usual eall of the western species of *Psophodes* with the resonant whip-crack notes of the Eastern Whipbird (*P. olivaceus*), from which the accepted vernacular was adopted, and with which two of us have long been familiar. Indeed, it would be hard to find a greater difference in the usual ealls of two species that are obviously congeneric.

We had expected to see *Psophodes nigrogularis* in the Albany area during the Field-Outing, and a fine recording of its call was given to the delegates on the evening of our arrival, which was identical with that given by the birds we observed earlier that morning. We did hear the now-familiar notes during the day we spent at Mount Gardner but caught no glimpse of the birds, so we consider ourselves fortunate to have made such an initial acquaintance with such an interesting species on that very inviting Gnowangerup sandplain.

—A. R. MCGILL, Arnelcliffe, N.S.W.